

Who owns the famous British sweet makers now?

From the sweeties.net wiki

Walk down the sweet aisle and it feels thoroughly British: Cadbury, Rowntree's, Terry's, Bassett's, Maynards, Thorntons, Barratt. But most of the companies behind those names are now owned from abroad. Here is who owns what.

Owned from America

- **Cadbury**, founded in Birmingham in 1824, has been owned by Kraft and then Mondelez International since 2010. See [how Cadbury was sold to Kraft](#).
- **Fry's**, the Bristol firm that made the first chocolate bar, merged with Cadbury in 1919 and is now a Mondelez brand too.
- **Bassett's**, founded in Sheffield in 1842 and the maker of Liquorice Allsorts, and **Maynards**, the wine gum makers, are also Mondelez brands. In 2016 they were merged into one brand, Maynards Bassetts.
- **Trebor**, founded in London in 1907, whose name is Robert spelt backwards, is a Mondelez brand as well.
- The **Mars bar** and **Maltesers** were born in Slough in the 1930s, but Mars has always been an American family firm: see [the mystery of the Mars family](#). In 2023 Mars also bought Hotel Chocolat.

Owned from Switzerland

- **Rowntree's** of York, the makers of KitKat, Aero, Smarties, Polo and Fruit Pastilles, was bought by Nestlé in 1988. See [when Nestlé bought Rowntree](#).
- **Mackintosh's** of Halifax, the makers of Quality Street and Rolo, had merged with Rowntree's in 1969, so it went to Nestlé too. Quality Street is still made in Halifax.

Owned from Italy

- **Terry's** of York, the makers of the Chocolate Orange, passed through Forte, Colgate Palmolive, United Biscuits, Kraft and Mondelez before joining the French company Carambar and Co, which Ferrero bought in 2025. See [how Terry's left York](#).
- **Thorntons**, founded in Sheffield in 1911, was bought by Ferrero in 2015 for £112m.

Owned from Germany

- **Haribo** is German, but it has made sweets in Yorkshire for decades. It entered the British market in 1972 by buying Dunhill's of Pontefract, a liquorice maker founded in the 18th century, and it has production sites in Castleford and Pontefract.

Owned by private equity

- **Barratt**, the brand behind Black Jacks, Fruit Salads, Sherbet Fountains, Dip Dabs, Refreshers and Wham, and **Fox's Glacier Mints** are made by Valeo Confectionery. Its parent, the Irish group Valeo Foods, was bought in 2021 by the American investment firm Bain Capital for €1.7bn.

Still made at home

Not every famous name has moved abroad. Some are still made where they always were:

- **Uncle Joe's Mint Balls**, made in Wigan by William Santus and Co since 1898.
- **Fisherman's Friend**, first made by the Fleetwood pharmacist James Lofthouse in 1865, and still made by the Lofthouse company in Fleetwood, Lancashire.
- **Quiggin's Kendal Mint Cake**, from the oldest surviving mint cake company, in Kendal.
- **Swizzels**, the makers of Love Hearts, Parma Violets and Drumstick lollies, still based in New Mills, Derbyshire, where the firm grew from a 1920s market stall in Hackney.

Does it matter?

That is the argument. Critics say that when the owners are abroad, decisions about factories and jobs are made abroad too, and point to the closures at Somerdale, York and elsewhere. Others point out that foreign owners have also invested heavily: Nestlé has spent more than £200m on its York factory since 1988, and Mondelez announced £75m for Bournville in 2014. Either way, it is worth knowing who is behind the wrapper. For Cadbury in particular, see [is Cadbury still British?](#).

Earn rewards on **sweeties.net**

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

+100 pts

Create your free account

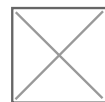
Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



100 pts = 1 tree

Plant a tree in Scotland

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.



sweeties.net · Tunbridge Wells, Kent · hello@sweeties.net · 3-click cancel at sweeties.net/cancel/